and co-workers in the gallery today.

is here seated at the table as well and she has family members

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witness list to the plaintiff, but I didn't submit it to the

Court, I apologize.

THE COURT: Okay. So I think what would make the most sense, but you'll tell me if this doesn't work, is that while the witness is up there I suggest you just ask all of your questions. So let's say we start with a witness that the plaintiff calls, you can cross examine that person, even if that person is also on your list and if, Mr. Siegler, at some point you want to ask direct questions relating to your motion, you can do that. I just think we should have all the questions asked of the witness while he or she is up there to avoid having them called and then recalled.

MR. SIEGLER: Your Honor, before we go into the openings, and in the spirit of getting this thing done efficiently, I had a proposal that if we stipulate for the purposes of today that there is a likelihood of success, a probability of success and not stipulate to irreparable harm inequities, it is going to shorten this thing by a very -- you know, it's going to shorten this thing considerably.

THE COURT: You're saying as to the plaintiff's motion you would stipulate to the probability of success --

MR. SIEGLER: I'm saying --

THE COURT: -- or likelihood of success, I'm sorry.

MR. SIEGLER: I'm saying if we do that and your

Honor doesn't --

THE COURT: If I don't have to hear the facts about

affidavit, which is how the business started and all that

other stuff. But when it comes to her dealings with

Mr. Rosenblatt, she's not going to testify to that.

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THE COURT: All right. But you understand, and I'm sure you do, that since this is a civil proceeding, her invocation of the Fifth though could give rise to a negative inference as to certain facts and so it does matter at least for the record and to me what facts exactly she's taking the Fifth as to. I can't say whether or not it's going to relate -- sorry, be relevant to my ultimate determination at this point, but certainly she holds certain information that seems to me to be central to both parties' motions. But going back to your original suggestion, I'm not sure it is a workable one, even though I appreciate your effort to try to streamline this.

Let me just hear from Mr. Kataev really quickly about this notion of stipulating to likelihood of success and then just addressing irreparable harm.

MR. KATAEV: I think the stipulation would be great for any post-hearing briefing on the subject, but as far as the hearing goes, I think there's a totality of the circumstances element here and the Court needs to know all the facts. Maybe we could short circuit some of those facts, but I can't agree not to get into any of those facts based on a stipulation. We'd like the Court to see all the evidence that we've obtained and we'd like to the Court see that there's more evidence to be obtained and that goes to the heart of our relief here, the relief we're requesting.

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Yes, sir. But no one is calling him or

THE COURT:

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and losses that result.

We're going to provide facts in evidence of the following chain of events today. In or about 2016, defendant

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Safa Gelardi was a banker working in a bank where she met a patron of the bank, a doctor, who had lost his medical license named Ronald Rosenblatt. The defendant, Safa Gelardi, in violation of her employer's banking rules, started a medical malpractice screening business in January of 2017 with Mr. Rosenblatt, despite the fact she's not a doctor and has zero experience in the legal medical malpractice field.

Through her relationship with Mr. Ronald Rosenblatt, Ms. Gelardi learned about Ronald's son, Adam Rosenblatt. Safa learned, during the course of this relationship, that Adam was employed by a company called IME WatchDog since about 2011.

IME WatchDog is a business that was started at home by a personal injury attorney named Daniella Levi. Ms. Gelardi learned that Adam, in his capacity as president of IME WatchDog has access to all of the business's financial and proprietary information, but was only a salaried employee with no membership interest or shareholder stake.

Based on what she heard from Ron, Ms. Gelardi became very interested in IME WatchDog as a business. She thought it was a great idea and became interested in starting a competing business, however, Ms. Gelardi is not an attorney. She's not a paralegal, she has no legal experience whatsoever and up until she met Mr. Adam Rosenblatt --

THE COURT: Slower. Yes. Okay.

MR. KATAEV: -- she did not know what an independent

medical examination was. She had never, prior to that time, read an IME report. So what did she do?

Safa directed and asked Ronald Rosenblatt to arrange a meeting with his son Adam so that she can speak to him. As soon as she met Adam, she identified him as an easy target to manipulate and take advantage of. She engaged in the campaign of bribery and blackmail with him, a lot of the carrot and the stick. Ms. Gelardi told Mr. Rosenblatt that they should start their own business. She knew that she could not do it alone and that he had all the knowledge, and so she needed him to assist her in her endeavor. Adam was the perfect target.

Using Ronald Rosenblatt, she set up a meeting with Adam and over time convinced him to bring over trade secrets and proprietary information so they can start this business together.

During their initial meetings in or about 2017, she promised him a 70 percent equity stake and to match his salary as well as a lump sum payment of \$5,000 in cash.

Mr. Rosenblatt was interested in having a stake in his own business and so he cooperated with her and provided her this information. However, as soon as he provided her this information, the deal quickly changed. All of a sudden it became a 40 percent stake and the salary would have to be reduced substantially until such time as they grew. Adam Rosenblatt felt taken advantage of and he immediately said he

didn't want to have any more dealings with her, but

Ms. Gelardi won in the process. Not only did she get the

business plan as well as sample reports that the IME observers

used, she basically received the complete road map as to how

to run this business and operate it.

With that, Safa Gelardi landed on a gold mine. She now had access to hundreds of personal injury law firms who she knows actually uses these IME observer services. We respectfully submit that not all personal injury law firms do. There is no way to obtain such a list. While it is true that the lists of personal injury law firms are public information, there is no list of personal injury law firms that utilize IME observer services.

Once Ms. Gelardi realized she had everything she needed to start the IME observer company, a competitor without Adam Rosenblatt, she decided to walk back her offer. Instead, Ms. Gelardi then took her business idea and all the secrets that she stole and she met with a suspended attorney named Greg Elefterakis, E-L-E-F-T-E-R-A-K-I-S. Mr. Elefterakis runs a funding company for personal injury cases because he is no longer licensed to practice law. They went into business together.

Safa wanted to hit the ground running and she wanted IME WatchDog's biggest client. With access to the customer list that she had with the corresponding amount of money that

each customer spent with IME WatchDog, she knew exactly who to target first and once she obtained that client she was ready and able to — ready, willing and able to continue running her business as a going concern. However, things didn't go so smoothly for Safa Gelardi. And so when that happened she decided to call on Adam Rosenblatt again. This time she told Adam, if you don't help me, I'm going to tell Daniella Levi exactly what you did. Adam, fearful of being reported to Daniella Levi, immediately complied. And as a reward for his compliance, Ms. Gelardi paid him money, which he accepted.

One of the things that Safa and Adam did together that caused irreparable harm to my client is Safa directed Adam to sabotage accounts, provide reports late, don't send a watch dog on the date and time confirmed. Do other things that are against the client's wishes and when they get upset, let me know and I will contact them and offer them a better price. Their plan worked; a lot of clients left and by our estimate there is over two and a half million dollars in damages.

Based on the bribery that ensued and the fact that
Safa was always able to get Adam to cooperate by reminding him
that he will definitely get fired and probably be criminally
prosecuted if he doesn't cooperate, she was able to run this
scheme for years and years unbeknownst to anybody.

In April of 2018, Safa decided she wanted to build a

website but the name www.imecompanion.com was already taken. As fate would have it, Daniella Levi anticipated that there would be competitors and she decided that because she wanted to expand the business into a national platform, she would want to have multiple names. She bought the imecompanion.com name in or about 2011, six-years before Safa ever came up with the competing name.

Safa was upset that the name was taken and she called Adam and said if you don't release that name to me, I'm going to tell Daniella what you did. Adam caused the domain name to be released and Adam received \$2,500 for doing so. This was another thing that caused the plaintiff irreparable harm. The plaintiff was prevented from moving forward on a national platform into franchising her business because of the fact that the domain name she purchased in order do so, one of them was stolen by the defendants.

Now that Safa was doing well, after a little over year in her business, she decided that she knew how to run IME Companions all on her own. She entered into an agreement to buy out her partners but as soon as she realized she had no idea what she was doing, she yet again contacted Adam Rosenblatt consistently asking him for help with every little detail of the IME observer business. What do you do if the doctor is being difficult about having a watch dog, what if a motion is filed against the personal injury law firm to

prevent the watch dog from coming in. These are all battles that the plaintiff had gone through already and had available at her disposal. She called Adam, asked Adam for the information under threat of reporting him, and Adam complied and provided it to her. She got all of the hard earned efforts of my client through bribery and threats and extortion. She has to be stopped.

THE COURT: Mr. Kataev, remember, I want to hear the witnesses, so could you wrap up your opening. I obviously appreciate the detail to some extent, but we do need to hear from the witnesses and have a limited amount of time.

MR. KATAEV: Yes, your Honor, I'll cut to the chase. We respectfully submit at the conclusion of this hearing that there will be undeniable evidence that plaintiff has been irreparably harmed. The case law in the Second Circuit says that if you --

THE COURT: Again, don't worry about the case law.

You can, if you want to, you can brief some of that later, but

I just want to get an idea of who is going to be up here and

what you anticipate they'll say. Kind of like an opening in a

trial.

MR. KATAEV: Understood. We intend to call first the defendants to hear from them directly on the questions. After that we will be calling an individual named Steven Rombom, a 40-year experienced, world-renowned private

investigation who was hired by our law firm to conduct an investigation into this matter. Mr. Rombom was instrumental in obtaining the evidence that we have in this case, including many admissions against by the defendants themselves which we intend to play for the Court to hear. Mr. Rosenblatt -- I'm sorry, withdrawn. Mr. Rombom was also instrumental in obtaining the cooperation of Mr. Rosenblatt, and you will hear testimony from him today about how he was able to do so.

After Mr. Rosenblatt testifies, we will place
Mr. Carlos Roa on the stand. Carlos Roa is a former employee
of IME Companions and he was the precipice upon which the
plaintiff discovered that this has been going on. Carlos Roa
will explain to the Court what the defendants did, why he was
complicit in what they did, and why he chose to stop doing
what they were doing.

We will also present to the Court the witness Adam
Rosenblatt himself. He will explain how he was manipulated,
what was done in order to secure his cooperation by Safa and
Vito Gelardi, and how he was confronted about what he had been
doing by the private investigator.

And finally, your Honor, you will hear from Daniella Levi herself. She will explain to you the painstaking efforts that she took to build her business from the ground up. A brand new business that no one had ever thought of before.

How it was effectively stolen by the defendants. I believe

that with that evidence we will be able to prove that irreparable harm has been established.

THE COURT: So, Mr. Siegler, I'm going to ask you to be brief as well given the list we have here of witnesses.

But what's going to be the defense's response, if any, to the allegation of about, essentially, getting through some improper means, you can call it trade secret or you can call it at least sensitive commercial business information, from plaintiff.

MR. SIEGLER: You're not going to hear her testify on that, Ms. Gelardi. She's going to plead the Fifth Amendment on that because she's been threatened with criminal charges.

Thank you, your Honor. As far as an opening, I didn't prepare a long speech. I think your Honor can hear that this is total overkill. It is based on a theory, a supposition that all this stuff happened. Ms. Levi, with all respect, has no idea how Ms. Gelardi started this business. How she started it with Mr. Elefterakis with pluck, with initiative, with hard work, with knocking on doors when she's six months pregnant, by going to PI firms door to door in Manhattan begging for work. And how Mr. Elefterakis, her business partner, set her up with very good accounts, guys who were his golf partners, you know, they went to school together or whatever it was. This business was built fairly. The vast

majority, I'm not saying all, I'm saying the vast, vast majority of this business was built on hard work, perseverance, and Ms. Gelardi's spirit and determination.

THE COURT: Let me stop you for one second. I just want to make sure that you and your client, since she's sitting in front of me, your clients, understand though that if they take the Fifth in this civil case regarding the specific allegations, which we've gotten a summary of and which the plaintiffs -- plaintiff claims she's going to prove or it's going to prove at this hearing about these meetings with Adam Rosenblatt and the request for information that at a minimum can be deemed proprietary, if they take the Fifth in the face of that, I can take a negative inference. In other words, I can infer that those are true, and you can argue to me that they built the business honestly, but you understand that the allegations and perhaps the facts, if I accept the testimony, will bear this out --

MR. SIEGLER: Your Honor --

THE COURT: -- suggest otherwise.

MR. SIEGLER: Correct. I want to clarify that

Ms. Gelardi will speak freely about all of her interactions

with Mr. Rosenblatt prior to the business being formed,

including a transfer of business information, which was

Mr. Rosenblatt's idea. He was trying to solicit business. He

hated Ms. Levi, he still hates Ms. Levi I'm sure because she's

forcing him to come to this thing and lie and she had an investigator basically threaten him, which we have on tape.

But prior to the company being formed, you'll hear -- you'll hear from our client that Adam Rosenblatt came to her multiple times trying to steal his employer's business and she turned him down. He sent her some information, she didn't pay for it, she didn't want it. He sent it to her. And by the way, he sent it to multiple other of Ms. Levis' competitors.

THE COURT: Let me ask you a question, there are a few things that are hard to reconcile in terms of being black or white. The idea, for example -- or the argument that there was a domain name, IME Companions, that belonged to Ms. Levi or her company but that Mr. Rosenblatt released at the time that Ms. Gelardi wanted to start her business --

MR. SIEGLER: We can talk about that, your Honor.

THE COURT: -- but how can that be legitimate. You could try to lay the blame at Mr. Rosenblatt's feet, but is there any dispute that that domain name belonged to plaintiff before it was released to defendant?

MR. SIEGLER: Yes. It was purchased by

Mr. Rosenblatt because he was upset -- sorry, Adam Rosenblatt,

because he was upset. It's our client's company name minus an

"S." So he knew we were IME Companions, and you'll hear, the

evidence will show, Safa got a call from a law firm, they were

typing in the wrong -- they were leaving off the "S" and the client was going to WatchDog's and the client was asking Ms. Gelardi what's going on, I keep trying to book an appointment with you, but it keeps going to WatchDog. That's when we found out about this other domain. It's called cyber squatting. There was no legitimate business purpose for her to open a website -- I don't believe it was Ms. Levi, I believe it was Mr. Rosenblatt. Safa did talk to him about that, she may have threatened him, but she didn't pay, there was no money in that. She may have said, look, release my domain, and I believe he did very shortly. There was no money exchanged for that.

THE COURT: What did she threaten him with when you

THE COURT: What did she threaten him with when you say threaten.

MR. SIEGLER: I think the evidence will show she threatened with him going to Ms. Levi and exposing that he sent her basically her business model back in 2017 for free without any strings attached. He also sent it to many other companies.

THE COURT: Okay. So go ahead, I interrupted you.

MR. SIEGLER: Well, I was talking about how
Ms. Gelardi started this business. She started it with three
other people, one was an attorney -- a former attorney who had
a successful lawsuit funding company.

THE COURT: Lawsuit funding, yes.

MR. SIEGLER: Lawsuit funding. She built the business through hard work, your Honor is going to hear about that.

And your Honor is also going to hear that these two companies are not the only companies in this space. There are many, many businesses who do exactly what WatchDog does. She does not have the monopoly on this business and she publishes — I say she, Ms. Levi all respect, her company publishes a list of clients, it publishes its IME report template, it publishes its prices, and all of these companies, Guards, Sharks —

THE COURT: Sharks.

MR. SIEGLER: -- WatchDogs, Sharks with a K,
Smartdogs, there's ZR Per Diem is getting into it. There is a
PI -- you know, an investigator company that's into it. Yeah,
and there's nurses who have a similar company.

THE COURT: So let me stop you here and ask you just very briefly again, what do you anticipate eliciting about your defamation claim that's the basis of your motion.

MR. SIEGLER: Honestly, your Honor, you have our affidavit --

THE COURT: Mask. Sorry.

MR. SIEGLER: Thank you.

You have our affidavit. You have Mr. Roa on tape doing these things. What you're going to hear is that he was

acting in the scope of his employment. He was acting as an agent of IME WatchDog. He was there at their behest. And we think the evidence will show, perhaps not today but through discovery, that IME Watchdog is vicariously liable for his conduct. He was acting as their employee. He was there that day as an observer —

THE COURT: Hang on, you said vicariously liable.

MR. SIEGLER: Correct.

THE COURT: Go ahead.

MR. SIEGLER: And I'm not here to prove that to you today, I think there is a likelihood of success on it, certainly as to Mr. Roa, and the discovery will show through emails, texts, phone calls, we're going to get Ms. Levi's phone, we're going to get Mr. Roa's phone and we're going to talk about how or if he was directed to go there and, if not, he's still acting within the scope of his employment.

THE COURT: So I have the gist of what you're going to argue in defense, which is that while it may be true that Adam Rosenblatt presented all this information to your client, he did so on his own and in fact your client didn't want to use it or didn't take it. That's the gist of it; is that right?

MR. SIEGLER: That's correct, your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. So let's have Mr. Kataev or Mr. Felsen call your first witness because I can see we have a

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you're projecting quite fine as it is.

No.

Α

GEORGETTE K. BETTS, RPR, FCRR, CCR Official Court Reporter

Prior to learning about IME WatchDog, you had no

Prior to hearing from Ronald Rosenblatt about --

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withdrawn.

THE COURT:

THE WITNESS:

give him an ownership interest in a competing business that

about April of '17, correct?

Hold on one second.

THE COURT:

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You told customers that you wanted to obtain, that

because IME WatchDog was owned by a personal injury attorney,

Mrs. Levi in anything.

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THE COURT: I'm sorry to interrupt you, but can you

April of 2017, around then. Maybe March.

THE COURT: And what did you do with that

information?

THE WITNESS: I didn't open it for months, Your

25 Honor.

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and I wanted to ask him if he recognized this firm.

THE COURT: The invoice listed as a customer of IME WatchDog a Elefterakis -- sorry, I'm mispronouncing it -- an e-company, is that when you're saying?

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THE WITNESS: It's a law firm. It's a law firm that

utilized IME WatchDog.

THE COURT: Right. So you wanted to confirm with the person who became your future business partner that that was not his law firm?

THE WITNESS: I knew he didn't have a law firm, Your Honor. I was taking the invoices to ask if he knew of this law firm, and if he did, I wanted to pitch him the idea of an IME business to do together.

THE COURT: So you did use that invoice --

THE WITNESS: I did use the invoice Your Honor.

THE COURT: -- IME Watchdog, to potential take one of IME WatchDog's customers from them?

THE WITNESS: No, not to take a customer. I used the invoice as a -- because he had the same name is. So I wanted to know, hey, first do you know this firm. Yes, these are my nephews' firm. Well, they use a service, IME WatchDog, and I previously pitched him a prior idea --

THE COURT: Who've the he, again?

THE WITNESS: I'm sorry. Mr. Elefterakis.

Mr. Gregory Elefterakis. I previously pitched him a different business idea and he turned it down. So the second meeting I had with him was with this invoice that I thought, you know, I wanted him to know that, you know, if -- because of the same name, that's the only reason it caught my attention.

THE COURT: But it seems to me you're missing the

Q After you opened IME Companions, you routinely called and texted Adam multiple times a day with questions on how to handle the day-to-day issues that popped up in such a business, correct?

25 A No.

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Q It's not true that you asked Adam to provide you with sample reports for IME observers to use?

- A I did ask him for one, report.
- 4 Q It's not true that you also asked him for sample motions
- 5 to use when insurance carriers tried to prevent the IME
- 6 observers from coming into the IME?
- 7 A No.

- 8 Q And when Adam provided you the report that you just
- 9 referenced, you paid him for that, correct?
- 10 A No.
- 11 THE COURT: What was the report?
- 12 THE WITNESS: It was a doctor's report. It was a
- 13 report from a Watchdog that observed a particular doctor.
- 14 THE COURT: And why did you ask him for that?
- 15 THE WITNESS: I asked him for that report because
- 16 | the doctor was very difficult and he gave us a very difficult
- 17 time. We also observed with that doctor. I just wanted to
- 18 | find out if it was something that he normally does, and it was
- 19 just for quality control.
- 20 THE COURT: But it was a IME WatchDog report?
- 21 THE WITNESS: Yes. It was an IME WatchDog report,
- 22 Your Honor, and we were already in business. It was strictly
- 23 | just a quality control my own companion to see -- you know, I
- 24 wanted to quality control.
- THE COURT: To help your business?

20 Q They contain medical information of personal injury

21 plaintiffs, correct?

25

22 A No. No, medical information.

23 Q So they're therefore confidential because you use them in

24 | the course of your business, correct?

A I think they're confidential because they're the

- 1 | attorney's client and -- there's no medical information in the
- 2 IME report.
- 3 Q And when you received this report from Adam, you copied
- 4 it, correct?
- 5 A No.
- 6 | Q When you received this report from Adam, you obtained
- 7 | something that's confidential, correct?
- 8 A Yes. I guess.
- 9 Q At some point in 2019, you started paying Adam through
- 10 Zelle, correct?
- 11 A I plead the Fifth.
- MR. KATAEV: Your Honor, I'm going to hand up what's
- 13 been previously marked as Plaintiff's Exhibit 1 to the witness
- 14 for identification.
- 15 THE COURT: Yes. Go ahead.
- MR. KATAEV: (Handing).
- 17 Q Ms. Gelardi, this is an e-mail that you received from
- 18 Adam Rosenblatt, correct?
- 19 A Looks that way, yes.
- 20 Q And you received that e-mail on March 14th, 2019,
- 21 correct?
- 22 A Correct.
- 23 Q And that was two years after you had already opened your
- 24 business, correct?
- 25 A Correct.

- 1 Q And it was long after any discussions you had with Adam
- 2 | about opening a competing business were over, correct?
- 3 A Correct.
- 4 | Q And in this e-mail, there's an attachment labeled Emilio
- 5 Gonzalez, Dr. Adam Bender, July 19, 2016, correct?
- 6 A Yes.
- 7 Q And attached to the e-mail on the second page is an IME
- 8 | WatchDog report, correct?
- 9 A Correct.
- 10 Q And it says on top, confidential attorney work-product,
- 11 correct?
- 12 A Correct.
- MR. KATAEV: Can you go to the fourth page please,
- 14 of the exhibit. I'm sorry, fifth page.
- 15 Q It says at the top, the first bullet point, the IME
- 16 | physician asked the examinee to describe his current symptoms,
- 17 correct?
- 18 A I don't see that.
- 19 Q We're on the fifth page. It says Page 4 of 22 at the
- 20 bottom.
- 21 THE COURT: It says Page 4 of 22?
- MR. KATAEV: On the bottom, but it's the fifth page
- 23 of the Exhibit, Your Honor.
- 24 THE COURT: Why don't we go to with the numbering on
- 25 the bottom --

Q Ms. Gelardi this is the sales by customers summary that you received from Adam at a meeting that you had with him,

THE COURT: Yes. Go ahead.

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attorney. Same to you Mr. Siegler, don't communicate with

1 your client via any silent means, okay.

MR. SIEGLER: Your Honor, can I address that? That is absolute scandalous allegation that I would be coaching my witness from the stand --

THE COURT: I did not see it. I'm not verifying it.

Everyone, this goes out saying, you cannot coach your witness from your position while they're on the stand, okay. So I'm not saying you did it. Everyone should just not do that. Perhaps, there was some misunderstanding about what was going on.

And I'll say this, witnesses often look at their attorneys, as it happens. So I'm not impugning Mr. Siegler's behavior in any way. So let's go back to Exhibit 4.

She's taken the Fifth. What do you want to do?

MR. KATAEV: Your Honor, I'd like first to offer it into evidence, as she's testified that that she received it.

THE COURT: Actually, she took the Fifth as to that question. I don't know if she said she received it and then you asked her the date or asked it together, but she took the Fifth, I know, as to the date.

MR. KATAEV: Your Honor, I ask that an adverse inference be entered that she did receive it based on her taking the Fifth, and I offer it into evidence any way.

THE COURT: Right. Based on the document itself, I have no reason to believe she did not.

1 Any objection to the admission, Mr. Siegler?

2 MR. SIEGLER: Yes. We've heard no testimony about

3 | it and, I believe this is the wrong witness to admit this

4 document. There's been no testimony whether she received it

5 or not.

6 THE COURT: I'm going to overrule that objection and

7 I'll note that it says from Adam Rosenblatt to Safa Gelardi,

the same, Gmail address as the other e-mails. Let me double

9 check that. Yes. As to which the witness has already

admitted to receiving e-mails at. So I'm going to allow

11 Exhibit 4 in to evidence. Based on the adverse inference, as

12 well.

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Go ahead Mr. Kataev.

14 (Plaintiff's Exhibit 4, was received in evidence.)

15 Q The reason Adam sent you this list is because it

16 | contained the decision-maker as to whether to purchase IME

observer services from each of these list of law firm,

18 correct?

19 A Can you just rephrase that so I can understand it.

Q Sure. The reason why Adam sent you this was because it

contained the contact information of the person within each

22 | law firm who makes decisions about whether to purchase IME

23 observer services, correct?

A What is this? What are you implying?

25 | Q I'm referring to Plaintiff's Exhibit 4 which has been

- 1 | admitted into evidence. It's the list of law firm names with
- 2 | an e-mail next to them?
- 3 A I plead the Fifth.
- 4 Q This is one of many e-mails that you received from Adam
- 5 | with such information, correct?
- 6 A What such information?
- 7 Q Contact information of an individual within the law firm
- 8 that's listed?
- 9 A I'm not sure.
- 10 MR. KATAEV: Your Honor, I'd like to offer into
- 11 | evidence what has been marked as Plaintiff's Exhibit 5.
- 12 THE COURT: Yes. Go ahead.
- MR. KATAEV: (Handing).
- 14 | Q Ms. Gelardi, at some point in 2019, you asked Adam
- Rosenblatt to open a Zelle account, correct?
- 16 A No.
- 17 Q And it's true that you made payments to Adam through
- 18 Zelle, correct?
- 19 A I plead the Fifth.
- 20 Q Referring to the first page of the exhibit, on
- 21 August 1st, 2019, you paid Adam Rosenblatt \$300 from your
- 22 personal account, correct?
- 23 A I plead the Fifth.
- 24 Q Referring to the second page, on October 8th, 2019, you
- 25 | paid Adam \$100, correct?

- 1 A I plead the Fifth.
- 2 Q Referring to the third page, on November 11, 2019, you
- 3 | paid Adam \$100 from your business account, correct?
- 4 A I plead the Fifth.
- 5 Q Referring to the fourth page, on March 5, 2020, you paid
- 6 Adam \$230 from your business account named IME Companions LLC,
- 7 correct?
- 8 A I plead the Fifth.
- 9 THE COURT: Mr. Kataev, please don't go through
- 10 every single one of these, okay. So I'm going to ask you,
- 11 Ms. Gelardi, to page through what appears to be about 25 pages
- 12 in Exhibit 5.
- 13 Are you taking the Fifth as to each of the payments
- 14 that are reflected in Exhibit 5 that appear to be from you to
- 15 Mr. Rosenblatt?
- 16 THE WITNESS: Yes, Your Honor.
- 17 THE COURT: Okay. If you want to ask anything more
- about any of those pages, fine, but we don't need to march
- 19 through every single one of them.
- 20 MR. KATAEV: Thank you, Your Honor. I'll just note
- 21 that there was 27 pages of separate payments.
- 22 THE COURT: All right. And Exhibit 5 is admitted
- 23 into evidence.
- MR. KATAEV: Thank you, Your Honor.
- 25 (Plaintiff's Exhibit 5, was received in evidence.)

MR. KATAEV: I'd like to offer -- present to the

2 witness an exhibit previously marked as Plaintiff's Exhibit 6.

3 THE COURT: All right. Do you have a notebook?

4 Maybe just put them all in a notebook and just give her the notebook.

6 MR. KATAEV: That's fine, Your Honor. I can do that.

THE COURT: That way you don't have to keep walking up to her with each one. That way you can refer her to the tab and she can just flip through it.

MR. KATAEV: Your Honor, it's about the only exercise I get.

THE COURT: Sorry about that. I appreciate that.

MR. KATAEV: Let the record reflect that the exhibit binder has been placed in front of the witness.

16 THE COURT: Now turn to Exhibit 6, Ms. Gelardi.

Q Ms. Gelardi, this is a screenshot of a text message exchange between yourself and Carlos Roa, correct?

19 A I don't know.

20 Q It says your name at the top in the middle, correct?

21 A I see my first name.

Q And on the right side, are messages that Carlos sent you,

23 correct?

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24 A I don't know.

25 Q And on the left side is information that you provided to

- 1 | Carlos, correct?
- 2 A Again, I don't know.
- 3 Q Rosenberg and Gluck is a customer of IME Companions,
- 4 correct?
- 5 A No, they are not.
- 6 Q Napoli is a law firm that is a customer of IME
- 7 | Companions, correct?
- 8 A No, they are not.
- 9 Q Hecht is a law firm that was a customer of IME
- 10 | Companions, correct?
- 11 A No, they are not.
- 12 THE COURT: For the court reporter, it's H-E-C-H-T,
- 13 Hecht.
- MR. KATAEV: Thank you, Your Honor.
- 15 Q Is there any reason you have to believe that these are
- 16 | not your text messages with Carlos Roa?
- 17 A I'm just -- I just don't see -- I don't see any other
- 18 information.
- 19 Q Now, at the bottom left of this text message exchange is
- 20 a screenshot, correct?
- 21 It says new assignment?
- 22 A Yes.
- 23 Q You sent that screenshot to Carlos, correct?
- 24 A I'm not sure.
- 25 Q If you go to the second page of the exhibit, you'll see

1 the full screen of the screenshot?

2 MR. KATAEV: I'll represent to the Court that that's

3 | what it is.

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4 Q This is a picture of an e-mail that Adam Rosenblatt

5 received, correct?

6 A I don't know.

Q Adam Rosenblatt sent you this screenshot, correct?

8 A Again, I do not know. I'm not sure.

MR. KATAEV: Your Honor, I offer it into evidence,

10 subject to connection.

11 THE COURT: I'm not going to allow this in yet

12 | because she hasn't testified that she knows who sent this or

13 | who the text exchange is with.

14 Obviously, I note that -- well, let me ask you this:

15 Ms. Gelardi, is there any reason for you to believe that SG

16 and Safa in this exhibit doesn't exit that this text was at

17 | least with you on one end?

18 THE WITNESS: Your Honor, honestly, you can put a

19 name on any number.

20 THE COURT: You don't recall this exchange at all?

THE WITNESS: I do not recall this exchange.

22 THE COURT: All right. I'm not going to allow it in

now until you can authenticate it with someone who actually

can testify as to who it was sent between and when.

MR. KATAEV: Okay. I'd like to offer --

THE COURT: Okay. Go ahead, Mr. Kataev.

- MR. SIEGLER: Objection. Compound.
- 21 THE COURT: She said no. Let's move on.
- 22 Overruled.
- MR. KATAEV: Your Honor, I offer this exhibit into
- 24 evidence. The witness testified that she sent this e-mail.
- THE COURT: Any objection?

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- 1 papers in connection with this lawsuit, correct?
- 2 A Correct.
- 3 Q And you were angry at Carlos Roa for reporting to
- 4 Daniella Levi what you were doing, correct?
- 5 A No.
- 6 MR. KATAEV: Your Honor, I offer this exhibit into
- 7 evidence as Plaintiff's 9.
- 8 THE COURT: All right. 9 is admitted.
- 9 Go ahead.
- 10 (Plaintiff's Exhibit 9, was received in evidence.)
- 11 THE COURT: I do have one question.
- When you said, like she will ever trust you after
- 13 what you did to me, what did you mean?
- 14 THE WITNESS: I mean, he betrayed me, he lied, what
- 15 makes you think if you betray and lie, that the next person
- 16 | will believe you or trust you.
- 17 THE COURT: What did he lie about, in your mind?
- 18 THE WITNESS: I think everything. I have no idea
- 19 what he lied about. I know that this whole thing is because
- 20 of his lies.
- 21 THE COURT: But you don't know specifically what he
- 22 told her that was so --
- THE WITNESS: No, your Honor.
- 24 THE COURT: At all. Okay. Go ahead.
- 25 Q You also started the process of franchising IME

- 1 | Companions LLC, correct?
- 2 A Correct.
- 3 | Q And you also filed for -- withdrawn.
- 4 You also filed to obtain a trademark for IME
- 5 | Companions, correct?
- 6 A Correct.
- 7 MR. KATAEV: I'd like the witness to be represented
- 8 | with what has been marked as Plaintiff's Exhibit 13.
- 9 Q Ms. Gelardi, this is a printout from the United States
- 10 | Patent and Trademark Offices website concerning a trademark
- 11 | tiled IME Companions, correct?
- 12 A Yes.
- 13 Q And you obtained this trademark, correct?
- 14 A Yes.
- 15 Q You recently obtained it on October 21th of 2021,
- 16 correct?
- 17 A Yes.
- 18 Q It states in this document that IME Companions offers
- 19 consulting services concerning legal matters in the medical
- 20 field, correct?
- 21 A Yes. It does say that.
- 22 Q But you're not an attorney, correct?
- 23 A Correct.
- 24 | Q And therefore, you cannot offer any consulting services
- 25 | concerning any legal matter, correct?

witness personally or to the business?

Q And therefore, you have no qualification whatsoever to

provide any of these services that we just talked about,

23 correct?

22

24

25

A No. I think we can provide legal services, we just cannot give legal advice.

- 19 customers for whom you provided observers, correct?
- 20 A That is not correct.
- 21 Q Without Adam, you would not know how to bill customers
- 22 for whom you provide observers, correct?
- 23 A That is not correct.
- 24 Q Without Adam, you would not know what to charge
- 25 customers, correct?

Without Adam, you would not know how to train observers,

Without bribing and threatening Adam, you would not know

Without bribing and threatening Adam, you would not know

I don't even understand the line of question. I'm just

how to deal with legal issues regarding the observers,

You derived a significant financial --

THE COURT: Repeat the question.

MR. KATAEV: I'll read it over.

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observers, correct?

Wrong.

Wrong.

how to pay observers, correct?

Absolutely incorrect.

going to say it's not correct.

correct?

correct?

AVERY N. ARMSTRONG, RPR OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

You derived a significant financial benefit from the IME

GELARDI - DIRECT - KATAEV

- 1 Watchdog information you obtained from Adam through bribery,
- 2 | threats, and coercion, correct?
- 3 | A No.
- 4 Q IME Companions has gross revenues of over \$1 million,
- 5 correct?
- 6 A No.
- 7 | Q IME Companions has over \$750,000 in gross revenues,
- 8 correct?
- 9 A No.
- 10 Q After you were served with this lawsuit, you instructed
- 11 Adam to destroy all the incriminating evidence he has,
- 12 correct?
- 13 A Absolutely incorrect.
- 14 | Q You and Mr. Vito Gelardi have other sources of income
- 15 | from which you derive income, correct?
- 16 A No. We have some rental properties, but very little
- 17 | income, Your Honor, from anything other than IME Companions.
- 18 Q But isn't it true that you bragged to people at IME
- 19 | Companions that one rental property covers your mortgage for
- 20 | that property and your home?
- 21 A No.
- 22 | Q You have a rental property located in Lake Harmony,
- 23 Pennsylvania, correct?
- 24 A Correct.
- 25 Q You charge \$358 per night for a stay at that Lake Harmony

Relevance.

GELARDI - CROSS - SIEGLER

1 goes to balance of the equities --

THE COURT: Right. Go ahead. I'll give you a

3 little bit of leeway, but unless you're going to tell me some

specifics about dollar amount, I'm not sure what this gets

5 you.

4

8

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6 Q How many employees does Companions have at the present

7 time?

A We have over 20 people working for us, Your Honor.

Q And Mr. Kataev spoke about household income.

10 Can you estimate for the Court how much of your

11 income you get from Companions versus rentals and other

12 things?

13 A IME Companions is roughly 85 percent of our main source

14 of income.

15 | Q What happens to your family if the business is shutdown

16 today?

24

17 MR. FELSEN: Objection, Your Honor.

18 THE COURT: Overruled.

MR. SIEGLER: You can answer.

THE WITNESS: I can answer?

21 A We would be totally devastated. We'd have to sell our

22 home. We'd have to sell our car. We'd have to take our

23 | children out of school. We would have -- I have 20 people,

single mothers, some of which are in this -- that work for us

25 | that rely on us as a sole income. We work around peoples'

GELARDI - CROSS - SIEGLER

- 1 | schedules. We have over 20 companions that I would say more
- 2 than half of them do this full time, Your Honor.
- 3 Q Ms. Gelardi, earlier in your testimony, you testified
- 4 that there was a mistake in your affidavit with respect to
- 5 | Sterling. I think your affidavit said 17 years.
- 6 Can you tell the Court about that?
- 7 A I have been in the financial industry, Your Honor, for 17
- 8 | years, working for the banks. I have been with Sterling close
- 9 to four. I would say three and a half to four years.
- 10 Q What were your job responsibilities at Sterling?
- 11 A I ran multiple branches. I was a district manager and
- 12 | ran multiple branches.
- 13 Q How many employees reported to you?
- 14 A Thirty to 40, Your Honor.
- MR. KATAEV: Relevance, Your Honor.
- 16 THE COURT: Overruled. For what it's worth.
- Go ahead, ask your next question.
- 18 | Q Would you -- what was the focus of your work at Sterling?
- 19 A Business development.
- 20 Q And did you bring in new business?
- 21 It was part of your job to bring in new business --
- 22 A Yes, sir.
- 23 Q Were you successful in that endeavor?
- 24 A Very successful.
- 25 Q Can you estimate for the Court how many dollars you

It is. It's live -- it is still in existence it's just

24

25

not being worked.

25

Α

No.

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Case 1:22-cy-01032-PKC-JRC Document 46-1 Filed 04/08/22 Page 90 of 197 PageID #: 950

25

evidence.

Correct.

THE WITNESS:

good friend of Greg Elefterakis. We were introduced to

and Nick. We got introduced to Mr. Alex Cherny, he was a very

24

Case 1:22-cy-01032-PKC-JRC Document 46-1 Filed 04/08/22 Page 96 of 197 PageID #: 956

Did you eventually buy out your partners?

Case 1:22-cy-01032-PKC-JRC Document 46-1 Filed 04/08/22 Page 97 of 197 PageID # 957

Between 2017 and 2019, the beginning of 2019, did you

No, he did not. He did not have any previous experience.

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24

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experience?

22 It stayed in my email. I printed -- I don't believe I

23 printed any of it. I might have printed the Sales by Customer

24 list.

25

What about the invoices?

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Case 1:22-cy-01032-PKC- IRC

Case	1:22-cv-01032-PKC-JRC Document 46-1 Filed 04/08/22 Page 102 of 197 PageID #
	S. GELARDI - CROSS - MR. SIEGLER
1	Q Is one of those companies Satellite Investigations?
2	A Yes.
3	MR. KATAEV: Objection. Relevance.
4	THE COURT: Sustained in terms of leading, but
5	MR. SIEGLER: Sorry, your Honor, why don't we just
6	ask.
7	Q Do you know the name of the company?
8	A I know there is IME Guards. I know that there's IME
9	Sharks. I know that there's Smartdog Solutions. There's ZR
10	Per Diem. There is a group of nurses upstate that also do
11	IMEs, they have an IME business, but they are a group of
12	nurses. There is also a group of nurses in New Jersey that
13	also own an IME business and I know this because I asked when
14	I go out to meet new clients, they tell me who they are using
15	and who they are not.
16	THE COURT: Next question.
17	Q Are you I'm sorry. To the best of your knowledge, do
18	these companies all compete for personal injury firm clients?
19	A Yes.
20	Q Do these companies all have basically the same prices?
21	A Yes.
22	Q Do they all provide similar services as WatchDog's and
23	Companions?
24	A Yes. The
25	THE COURT: Sustained. I assume that calls for some

Case	1:22-cv-01032-PKC-JRC Document 46-1 Filed 04/08/22 Page 103 of 197 PageID #
	s. gelardi – cross – mr. siegler
1	hearsay, but I mean I don't know how she would know that
2	unless someone tells her that because she's not how do you
3	know all this?
4	THE WITNESS: It's on the website, your Honor. They
5	all explain what we do, what our benefit is, why you should
6	hire us. We also have videos.
7	THE COURT: So based on the websites
8	THE WITNESS: Correct.
9	THE COURT: you say they provide the same
10	services as your company.
11	THE WITNESS: Yes, your Honor.
12	THE COURT: All right. Go ahead.
13	BY MR. SIEGLER:
14	Q As far as WatchDog, do they publish any material on the
15	website?
16	A Yes.
17	Q What do they publish on their website?
18	A They publish your Honor, a report is published on
19	their website. There is a video.
20	THE COURT: When you say a report, you're talking
21	about one of the examination reports.
22	THE WITNESS: Correct, your Honor.
23	THE COURT: With any redactions?
24	THE WITNESS: I believe there was redactions,
25	correct. The client's name would be redacted I believe.

Case	1:22-cv-01032-PKC-JRC Document 46-1 Filed 04/08/22 Page 104 of 197 PageID #
	s. gelardi – cross – mr. siegler
1	THE COURT: Is there pricing information on their
2	website?
3	THE WITNESS: Yes, ma'am yes, your Honor.
4	THE COURT: Okay.
5	BY MR. SIEGLER:
6	Q What else do they put on their website?
7	A They have reviews. They have a list of their own
8	clients. How much they charge. How much they charge for out
9	of state, I believe. They have a video explaining to you
10	exactly what they do on the website.
11	Q Do the IME companies you mentioned well, let me ask
12	you this way. Does your company Companions have an exclusive
13	contract with any of our clients?
14	A No.
15	Q To the best of your knowledge, being in the industry, do
16	other watch dog companies or IME observer companies have
17	THE COURT: Sustained.
18	Q exclusive contracts
19	THE COURT: Sustained.
20	Q Have you ever has your company ever been called by a
21	client saying, in essence, I tried someone else but they're
22	not free, do you have something
23	MR. FELSEN: Judge
24	THE COURT: Sustained.
25	Q Are there companies that use your company and other

Case 1:22-cy-01032-PKC-JRC Document 46-1 Filed 04/08/22 Page 106 of 197 Page D

I sent

THE WITNESS:

Case	1:22-cv-01032-PKC-JRC Document 46-1 Filed 04/08/22 Page 108 of 197 PageID #:
	S. GELARDI - CROSS - MR. SIEGLER
1	this to Carlos. Carlos worked for me at the time.
2	THE COURT: Why did you send it to him?
3	THE WITNESS: I mean, he was a smart guy. You know,
4	I wanted him to actually I sent it to him to just make him
5	aware. He was working with me that, look at the accusation
6	and look at the email reply.
7	THE COURT: Let me digress for one second. At the
8	time that you bought out your partners in 2019
9	THE WITNESS: Correct.
10	THE COURT: January 2019, how many workers did
11	IME Companions have?
12	THE WITNESS: In 2019, I would say maybe seven to
13	10.
14	THE COURT: How many of them were companions?
15	THE WITNESS: All of them.
16	THE COURT: And who was running the business then?
17	THE WITNESS: I was.
18	THE COURT: Go ahead, Mr. Siegler.
19	BY MR. SIEGLER:
20	Q Ms. Gelardi, let's turn to the incident with Mr. Roa or
21	the alleged incident with Mr. Roa recently.
22	Does IME Companions have contracts, written
23	contracts with its observers?
24	A We do with some, yes.
25	Q Did IME Companions have relationships with its observers?

Case	1:22-cv-01032-PKC-JRC Document 46-1 Filed 04/08/22 Page 109 of 197 PageID #
	S. GELARDI - CROSS - MR. SIEGLER
1	MR. KATAEV: Objection. Relevance.
2	THE COURT: Hang on a second. Let me hear more
3	about this. Go ahead. Overruled.
4	A What do you mean by relationships?
5	Q Well, there's a Companions works with observers,
6	correct?
7	A Correct.
8	Q And let's start, what's the nature of their relationship
9	with observers, are they employees or something else?
10	A They're independent contractors.
11	Q And does Companions' business need observers?
12	A Yes, without observers we have no business.
13	THE COURT: I'm sorry, what incident with Mr. Roa
14	are you referring to the fact
15	MR. SIEGLER: Referring to our preliminary
16	injunction.
17	THE COURT: All right, go ahead.
18	Q Does Mr. Roa know who your observers are?
19	A Yes.
20	Q Does he know their names?
21	A Yes.
22	Q I'm sorry. And Mr. Roa, where does he work?
23	A He now works for WatchDog.
24	THE COURT: When did he leave your company?
25	THE WITNESS: The day I fired him on March 1st when

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Mr. Shalit, sir, have a seat. THE COURT: get into the allegations relating to Mr. Roa's alleged, I guess, collusion with Ms. Levi to defame defendants' company, but I suspect Mr. Roa's name is going to come up as part of

Case 1:22-cy-01032-PKC-IRC Document 46-1 Filed 04/08/22 Page 113 of 197 PageID

- 18
- 20 Correct. Α
- 21 THE COURT: I'm sorry, was he a doctor at the time?
- 22 THE WITNESS: Your Honor, he was a doctor that was
- 23 consulting on med mal cases for attorneys, but he wasn't
- 24 allowed to practice medicine.
- 25 The reason why you opened up IME Companions was because

GELARDI - REDIRECT - KATAEV

- 1 | you wanted to own your own business, correct?
- 2 A Correct.
- 3 Q And you testified that Adam hates Daniella Levi, correct?
- 4 A Yes.
- 5 Q But Adam is still an employee of IME WatchDog, correct?
- 6 A To my knowledge, yes.
- 7 Q And to your knowledge, Adam did not leave to go work for
- 8 anybody else, correct?
- 9 A Correct.
- 10 Q And to your knowledge, Adam did not go and open up his
- 11 own competing business, correct?
- 12 A Correct.
- 13 Q And you ultimately went and opened up a competing
- 14 business, correct?
- 15 A Yes.
- 16 Q Now, you stated in your affidavit that Med Mal USA LLC
- 17 | was dormant; is that right?
- 18 A Yes.
- 19 Q But at the same time, you also testified that you were
- 20 busy with Med Mal LLC; isn't that true?
- 21 A No. You have the facts screwed up. I was busy with Med
- 22 Mal when Adam wanted to -- wanted us to help him start IME --
- 23 his own IME business.
- 24 Q You just can't tell this Court when which was which,
- 25 correct?

GELARDI - REDIRECT - KATAEV

- 1 A It was all on or around, Your Honor, 2016 to 2017. It
- 2 | was all in that time.
- 3 Q You stated in your declaration in opposition to the
- 4 instant motion that Ronald Rosenblatt had medical issues which
- 5 | made him an unreliable partner, correct?
- 6 A Correct.
- 7 | Q And you said that that happened after only a few months,
- 8 correct?
- 9 A Yes, Your Honor.
- 10 Q So was that only from 2016 to 2017, a span of a year, or
- 11 was that a few months, as you said in your affidavit? Which
- 12 one is it?
- 13 A It was a few months.
- 14 Q Now, you testified that you started this business with
- 15 Mr. Elefterakis, correct?
- 16 A Yes.
- 17 Q But you concede that Elefterakis was a client or a
- 18 | customer of IME WatchDog, correct?
- 19 A You've got the Elefterakis' mixed up.
- 20 Q Well, the Elefterakis' -- withdrawn.
- 21 The Elefterakis firm was a customer of WatchDog,
- 22 correct?
- 23 A There was an Elefterakis firm, correct. But that's not
- 24 who I started the business with, Your Honor.
- 25 THE COURT: But was the firm a WatchDog customer at

THE COURT: Mr. Kataev, I assume it's because their

customers paid the same price, correct?

You testified that you did cold calls and went door to

Any redirect?

THE COURT:

didn't pay for any of the documents she received from Mr. Rosenblatt relating to WatchDog.

Are you invoking your right against self-incrimination, Ms. Gelardi, as to paying Mr. Rosenblatt to receive information about IME WatchDog?

THE WITNESS: Your Honor, those payments have nothing to do with any documents he ever sent me.

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THE COURT: That's not my question. Case 1:22-cy-01032-PKC-IRC Document 46-1 Filed 04/08/22 Page 123 of 197 PageID

GELARDI - REDIRECT - KATAEV

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wanted to ask the follow up, because the invocation before that was much more general. But I understand what you're saying in terms of timing, but I want to make sure it's clear on the record that the invocation has to do with getting information from Mr. Rosenblatt that related to IME WatchDog and also furthered her own business.

One last question in this vein, with regard to the information that you paid Mr. Rosenblatt for in 2019, did you believe that it was confidential business information of IME WatchDog in --

THE WITNESS: No, I plead the Fifth.

THE COURT: You're pleading the Fifth as to that?

THE WITNESS: Your Honor, I would like to say, no, I do not believe it was confidential information.

THE COURT: All right. Was it business information relating to WatchDog that you could have gotten on your own?

THE WITNESS: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: So -- but you paid Mr. Rosenblatt for this information? Can you explain why?

THE WITNESS: I would love to.

THE COURT: But you're taking the Fifth?

THE WITNESS: Per my attorney advice, I will plead

the Fifth. Honestly, I would love to explain it.

THE COURT: And when you paid Mr. Rosenblatt, was it pursuant to some agreement with Mr. Rosenblatt that he would

AVERY N. ARMSTRONG, RPR OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

THE COURT:

MR. KATAEV: No. I believe it's sufficient.

All right. It's your case. You may

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something that you can -- some kind of witness statement?

MR. KATAEV: No, your Honor. But I would say that
we should finish his direct before it's time to leave for
today, and that would give him an opportunity to prepare for

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PROCEEDING

1 cross.

exclude it or strike it.

disregard that testimony.

THE COURT: I would like to hear his testimony.

I'll see whether or not if it's of such a nature that I should

I want to make one other observation before we go on. I erred, I believe, when I let Ms. Gelardi testify as to her opinion about Mr. Roa's credibility or character for truthfulness. Under Rule 608, that kind of evidence should come in by way of reputation evidence. In other words, what is someone's reputation in the community for truthfulness. She actually just testified as to her own feeling about Mr. Roa's trustworthiness and truthfulness. So I'm going to

The other part of the rule is that that evidence shouldn't come in until the witness -- and here it would be Mr. Roa -- that his character, rather, is challenged, his character for truthfulness is challenged. That hasn't happened yet. But obviously, we're taking things a bit out of order.

In any event, I don't think it satisfies the rule, and I think I made a mistake by allowing Ms. Gelardi simply to testify as to her own view. So I'm going to disregard that.

Okay. So let's call Mr. Rombom.

MR. KATAEV: Steven Rombom.

(The witness takes the stand.)

25

today.

potential clients and existing clients, and I was asked to

conduct an investigation to determine if that was, in fact,

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24

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true.

ROMBOM - DIRECT - FELSEN

And can you explain what your investigation entailed? 2 I will say that it was a remarkably short investigation.

Almost immediately we were able to determine that Mr. Adam

Rosenblatt, a senior employee of IME WatchDog's was 4

5 potentially involved in misdirecting clients, turning over --

I'm summarizing, but turning over confidential records, and in

7 return for which, he was receiving payments primarily via the

8 Zelle service, Z-E-L-L-E, from a competitor of IME WatchDog's

known as IME Companions. I requested permission to -- of your

10 firm, Milman Labuda, I requested permission to conduct an

unscheduled interview of Mr. Rosenblatt, you agreed. On 11

March 1st, I interviewed Mr. Rosenblatt. It was an

admission-seeking interview. During the interview, he did

confess. He confessed in great detail throughout the

15 afternoon of that day.

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Following his confession, he made a controlled call to IME Companions. A controlled call is a call where one of co -- alleged co-conspirators will call the other alleged co-conspirators and try to get them to discuss the conspiracy and discuss the components of the conspiracy in detail. did make that call, recorded by him with our assistance. He spoke with Safa Gelardi. He spoke with Vito Gelardi. went into great detail about the activities about the payments. In that first call, Safa Gelardi told him, don't worry about it, I see you're nervous, it'll never be found

(Plaintiff's Exhibit 18A, was received in evidence.)

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actually use the bathroom.

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let me know and I'll make my own observation. I didn't see

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saying.

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Okay.

THE COURT:

You were physically present when the call was being

recorded with so much interference.

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call is a little subdued. I could hear the whole

A He didn't deny it completely, he minimized it.

Q What did he say to minimize it?

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ROMBOM - CROSS - SIEGLER

1 He said well, gee, these are clients that were going to 2 leave us anyway or -- which he quickly came up off. He -- you 3 know, he later admitted that these were in fact clients that 4 were still giving some business to IME WatchDogs. He also 5 said, well, you know, it wasn't that hard. I would tell them 6 we couldn't service them here at IME WatchDogs and I would 7 refer them to someone else. He made it sound like it was a 8 minimal thing, and then when we got into a discussion about 9 how much money he was being paid by the Gelardis, how he was 10 essentially moving clients wholesale over to the Gelardis in return for this money, that he realized what he did and he got 11 12 a little emotional about it and he started saying, I don't 13 know why I did it. They tricked me. They told me they would 14 help my father. Apparently his father had some issue and, 15 finally, without any prompting whatsoever he confessed to 16 everything.

- 17 Q Was he crying at one point?
- 18 A Yes, he was.
- 19 Q Was --
- 20 A Not -- excuse me. Let me rephrase that. He was not
- 21 | weeping, there were no tears, but he was -- he was weepy.
- 22 Q He was visibly upset?
- 23 A Wouldn't you be?
- Q I absolutely would be if two investigators walked into my
- office unannounced and started grilling me with this kind of

ROMBOM - CROSS - SIEGLER

quote/unquote, co-conspirator without their knowledge and record it, how did that occur?

A First of all, I asked him if he regretted what he had done and he said yes, very much so. I said, are you willing to assist us in undoing the damage that you've done, and he said, how could I do that. And I told him, look, the first thing that we need to do is we need to get evidence that what you're telling us is in fact the truth. You know, you told us one thing in the beginning of the conversation, you told us another thing as it moved forward.

Now -- now that you have shown us payments that we didn't have, now that you've detailed specific clients that you moved over from IME WatchDogs to IME Guardians, I believe they're called, I'd like you to -- I'd like you to make a controlled call to the Gelardis and discuss with them the actual things that you've done in the past with them. That you've diverted clients to them, that you've given them information, that you've made them a lot of money that would have otherwise have been made by your employer. And he said, just like they do on TV? I said, precisely like they do on TV, and he agreed to do that. We set up the first phone call for him. It went well --

- 23 Q I'll back up a second, I'm not there yet.
- 24 A Okay.

25 Q He was still employed by IME WatchDog at that time?

So you didn't give the audio of your interview with

established.

I also want to note, not that I think this is much of an issue, but although I've policed the admission of hearsay because this is a preliminary injunction hearing, I am actually allowed to consider hearsay evidence, and I'll just cite a couple of cases for that proposition. Mullins versus City of New York, M-U-L-I-N-S, 626 F.3d 47, Second Circuit case from 2010. And also Zeneca, Inc., the company, Z-E-N-E-C-A versus Eli Lilly Corporation, cited at Westlaw 1 -- sorry, reported at Westlaw 1999, Westlaw 509471, which is a Southern District of New York case from 1999, and it cites other cases.

So even to the extent that some hearsay has been admitted, and I'll note actually that most of it came through the questioning of the defense attorney just now of the investigator about what Mr. Rosenblatt told him, I can consider that. But, quite frankly, I don't think I need to consider it nor do I need to see the notes from Mr. Rosenblatt, I'm sorry Mr. Rombom to determine that the defendant did take confidential information and knowingly did so in exchange for money. There's no challenge to Exhibit Number 5, which has 27 pages worth of Zelle payments. Then I just heard a recording where it is clear to me the defendants, Mr. and Mrs. Gelardi, are acknowledging that they have this ongoing relationship or had it with Mr. Rosenblatt where they were willing to pay him money to get information and then

provide him safe haven by bringing him over to their company and possibly paying him \$2500 in that moment because Mr. Rosenblatt expressed financial desperation.

I don't find, and I don't think I have quite enough evidence, but I don't need it, to find that the defendants paid for information before 2019, though I have some reasonable doubts I think that that didn't occur before or have some reason to believe it occurred before because if the defendants were willing to pay money for it starting from 2019, it seems logical they would have done so from the beginning.

On the other hand, they got the information it appears unsolicited. I actually think that's a credible part of Ms. Gelardi's testimony. I do not credit other parts of your testimony though, Ms. Gelardi. I don't believe for a moment that you thought that the information Rosenblatt was sharing with you, even if it was volunteered in the beginning, was anything other than confidential. You had to know from your days in business and in the banking industry that there's confidential, proprietary information that a business is not allowed to share, or that an employee of a business is not allowed to share with a competitor and that there is a fiduciary duty. If you're in the banking industry you well know that. So I didn't credit that testimony and I believe that you and your husband knew full well you were essentially

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stealing this information or buying it from Mr. Rosenblatt at least as of 2019. That happens to coincide with when you bought the business from your initial investors, which is why I asked you about how many observers you had at that time and how big your revenue was and just doing some quick math, 10 to 12,000 a month in revenue is really not enough to even pay these seven or eight observers and yourself a salary. perhaps there is some other financial arrangement or maybe they got some money on the side for doing these investigations or observations, but nonetheless it makes sense to me that you started paying for this information to grow your business just as you said in the phone call with Mr. Rosenblatt, that in fact it sounds like your business took off from 2019, which coincided with when you are getting all this information from Mr. Rosenblatt. And I just heard from the investigator and I have considered it, that Mr. Rosenblatt admitted that he gave all sorts of information to try to help you and your husband grow your competing business.

I don't need to resolve this fight over the domain,

I don't think it's relevant particularly because there is

certainly a likelihood of success on the merits. So then the

question remains irreparable harm and the scope of the

injunction, if any.

Now I'll make a couple of observations, but I want the parties to address this further. First of all, I think

that the injunction, the thing requested is overly broad. I don't think, although this is a preliminary thought in my mind, that IME Companions can be shut down entirely. The plaintiff's counsel admitted that they are able to quantify at least an amount of damages at this point, substantial as they may be, and if those damages can be paid, then obviously preliminary relief in the form of an injunction is inappropriate.

On the other hand, if the plaintiff can show that there's some significant risk of damage to reputation or of plaintiff's business, it's really more relevant whether plaintiff is losing so much money that they may go out of business quite frankly than what will happen to defendants' business, then there might be a showing of irreparable harm. You all know the law, so I want you to brief this further and give me some actual evidence as to why it is or is not irreparable harm given that I have found that these secrets, trade secrets, client information, other protocols have been taken improperly.

In that vein as well what I think is also true is that the defendant should not be allowed to franchise based on any information they obtained unlawfully or at least against — or improperly I should say. That's pretty clear in the case law, that that would create a serious risk of irreparable harm to the plaintiff.

And I guess the third suggestion I make is that it would be helpful to me if I knew if plaintiff can actually trace those clients that they've lost to IME Companions, because it seems to me if Mr. Rosenblatt is cooperating with plaintiff, he ought to be able to provide such a list.

Now I think you may have done something similar to that already, and I see, Mr. Kataev, you have something in your hand.

MR. KATAEV: Yes, your Honor, I'm waiting for you to finish so I can address your points.

THE COURT: That's fine. So I am willing to consider crafting some kind of injunction relief that perhaps doesn't go quite as far as the plaintiff has requested. I don't think it's necessarily appropriate to put IME Companions out of business, but it is appropriate not to let them franchise, if what they're franchising off of is essentially stolen information. And, again, the question is what is the irreparable harm to plaintiff. What will happen to its business, not so much what will happen to IME Companions.

MR. KATAEV: Thank you, your Honor. I just want to clarify something before I begin. You said three suggestions. The first was briefing on irreparable harm. I believe the third was how we can trace the, quote/unquote, damages. What was the second?

THE COURT: I don't know the order. Franchising is

kind of, you know, it's a rampant -- it's running rampant

trade secrets without any confidentiality order, without any

as the normal discovery process with the normal safeguards in

They want to run through our records, disclosing our

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through their records, I don't think that's called for.

What you have here is \$6,000 of payments. I mean, this is not the crime of century. It's an important crime, I get it -- not say crime, it's an important allegation and it was wrong, if what they say is true. And I conceded that at the beginning, your Honor. I said there is probably a likelihood of success to some extent.

But that said, I appreciate what you said about not close the business, my client appreciates it, her employees appreciate it. But we're talking about a forensic analysis, I think we do it in the subject — in the context of normal discovery and not something we have to rush to do, you know, on a moment's notice.

THE COURT: Well, the only disagreement I have with you on that is that the plaintiff's position, and I don't know how fully supported it is or how well it's supported I should say, is that time is of the essence. In other words, for every day we delay some kind of resolution, the plaintiff's losing not only revenue, but perhaps reputation and standing in this market. That's part of their argument. So time is an issue.

What I want to do is, and what I'm inclined to do is, issue at least a limited injunction on any franchising by defendants until the irreparable harm issue can be explored further by the parties either, or by briefing, or some kind of

settlement can be reached between the parties about perhaps some kind of damages --

MR. SIEGLER: Your Honor --

THE COURT: -- or rectification of the situation.

But I think, for me, the franchising is a pretty clear demarcation that that should not happen and that injunction I'm very likely to issue.

MR. SIEGLER: We're also agreeing, your Honor, not to contact Mr. Rosenblatt, so whatever leak was occurring it's now stopped up, it's been stopped up since March. We have no intention of getting back in touch with this gentleman, so that's one of the reliefs that they requested. We're totally consenting to that, we're not going to contact Mr. Rosenblatt.

MR. KATAEV: Your Honor, two points to address. The last argument was a red herring, respectfully. This cow has been milked for everything it's worth and there's nothing further to be gained from Mr. Rosenblatt. They have the information in hand and we'll brief the subject over irreparable harm.

Second, with respect to time being of the essence, it's a travesty that this Court did not hear the third recording because Mr. Rosenblatt can be heard repeating what Mr. Gelardi said, destroy everything, delete everything, do you want me to take everything. There's very big risks of spoliation here. We need a forensic analysis immediately,

whether it's neutral ordered by the court or otherwise the plaintiff will do it.

MR. SIEGLER: Your Honor, this is the tape that you can't hear Mr. Gelardi speak. It's a recording of one person speaking, so counsel may have inside information that I don't, but to me he just misrepresented something to the Court. It's a one-sided conversation only and it is of zero, zero evidential value until someone enhances it, which they haven't yet.

THE COURT: I assume what Mr. Kataev is recounting is Mr. Rosenblatt saying whatever he said, do you want me to destroy it.

MR. KATAEV: That's correct, your Honor.

THE COURT: I'll listen to the tape and see if I can discern anything or if at least it seems credible as opposed to him gilding the lily, which I doubt he would do since he thinks it's being recorded, but again I think what we should focus on is, I have made a finding, I did find improper conduct. There is a likelihood of success based on just what I've heard, I don't need to hear from any other witnesses.

The recordings, quite frankly, the negative inferences I made about the payments and the clear payment records themselves via Zelle tell the story. It's enhanced to some extent by Mr. Rombom's description of what Mr. Rosenblatt said during the interview, which was elicited by you,

misconstrued as defaming, because there is a pending complaint

or claim for defamation. Which is the other thing I wanted to address, which is that obviously is on a different timeline slightly, but I think it's worthwhile trying to resolve it, if the parties can, some kind of agreement about that. In other words, dropping those claims if in fact you folks could come to some resolution about this action, and then both sides agreeing not to speak ill of each other or try to speak badly to potential clients about each other for some period of time, if not indefinitely. I think that would make sense. But I do

I will then review this pocket brief. Mr. Siegler, though you should have an opportunity to respond to it and then why don't we just have then the plaintiff reply as a form of giving you another chance to supplement your pocket brief.

MR. SIEGLER: You mean defendants?

want you folks to talk to each other.

other words, defendants can respond to the pocket brief or put in anything you want to about the irreparable harm injury, then I'll have plaintiff's reply to that. I say reply because I already have a pocket brief from them, but they can put in whatever they want to about irreparable harm, including responding to the opposition of the defendants.

I'm trying to shorten this process so we can move it along. Yes, Mr. Shalit.

MR. SHALIT: Yes, your Honor.

MR. KATAEV: That's correct, your Honor.

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THE COURT: If you want to stay that until you have

MR. SIEGLER: -- we don't know which customers those are.

THE COURT: That I can't do that now. We have a small window of time in which I want to hear some briefing about the irreparable harm. I cannot say that that would necessarily be a part of an injunction, I don't know, because if it's compensable as damages, then every dollar they earn from these allegedly stolen customers can be recompensed, right, so --

MR. FELSEN: But, your Honor, why should they be entitled to continue doing this. You already found what they've done is unlawful.

THE COURT: Right, but it may not be irreparable harm, and I'd like to hear more, because I don't know which customers, other than based on what you say they allegedly took, and I also don't know if just the taking of those customers is sufficient to show irreparable harm. I mean, you equate the mere taking of customers as stealing revenue with irreparable harm, but the case law isn't quite as broad in that regard. So I just want some more briefing, this will be just another couple of weeks.

So I'm not going to put that as part of the injunction just yet, but that's what the argument is about. You need to tell me which clients, the magnitude of the loss, and why it actually meets the standard of irreparable harm.

primarily taken from the affidavit of Carlos Roa. There is a

So that concludes today's proceeding. I thank everyone for

the presentation and preparation.

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